

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 DHA-02 PRS-01
USIA-06 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSM-03 /072 W
-----006756 111614Z /47

R 111312Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7087
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMERICAN EMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PORS PINT EG
SUBJECT: FURTHER ATONEMENT (TAKFIR) SOCIETY DEVELOPMENTS

REF: CAIRO 11410 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY. TAKFIR ACCUSED OF "HARMLESS" JUNE 9 EXPLOSIONS IN
DOWNTOWN CAIRO. WAVE OF ARRESTS CONTINUES THROUGHOUT EGYPT
AND INTENSIVE INTERROGATIONS OF ARRESTEES UNDERWAY. DEPUTY
LEADER STILL AT LARGE. LEADER SHUKRI DESCRIBED IN PRESS
AS FORMER IKHWANI, EXPELLED BY BROTHERHOOD AS EXTREMIST.
PRESS CLAIMS HE HAS CELLS IN ARAB COUNTRIES. GOE CONTINUES
ALL OUT EFFORT CONVINCE PUBLIC THAT SECURITY SITUATION UNDER
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CONTROL AND TO DISCREDIT TAKFIR FOR ITS ANTI-ISLAMIC TENETS.
MEANWHILE, GOE SEEMS INTENTION ASSURING IKHWANI THAT IT WILL
NOT ITSELF BE SUBJECT OF REPRESSION. END SUMMARY.

1. CONTINUED EXTREMELY BROAD COVERAGE OF AFTERMATH OF
DHAHABI MURDER SERVED UP FOLLOWING JUNE 10 AND 11:

2. ANOTHER INCIDENT: "BOMB" SET OFF NEAR PUBLIC GARDENS IN DOWNTOWN CAIRO JUNE 9, LOUD REPORT EXCITING SOME PANIC IN AREA. POLICE, HOWEVER, ANNOUNCED THAT EXPLOSION HARMLESS SINCE BOMB CONSISTED LARGELY OF GUNPOWDER. AIM SAID TO BE TO CAUSE PANIC RATHER THAN CASUALTIES. POLICE LINKED INCIDENT VAGUELY TO TAKFIR SOCIETY BUT DID NOT REVEAL SPECIFICS.

3. ARREST AND INTERROGATIONS: MEANWHILE, PRESS ANNOUNCES ARREST OF SOME 130 OTHER TAKFIR "LEADERS" AND MEMBERS THROUGHOUT LOWER EGYPT AND IN GOVERNORATES OF ALEXANDRIA, SHARQIYA, DAQAHALIYA, GHARBIYA AND ISMAILIA. (WE CAUTION THAT PRESS ACCOUNTS OF ARRESTS IN EGYPT ARE INVARIABLY REPETITIVE AND FIGURES UNRELIABLE). SPECIFICALLY, LEADERS OF GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR BOMBING OF SPHINX THEATER, INCLUDING AGRONOMIST ANWAR MAHMUD SAQR, MISTAKENLY IDENTIFIED IN JULY 10 PRESS AS DEPUTY HEAD OF TAKFIR SOCIETY. PRESS ALSO CLAIMS TO HAVE LEARNED THAT FORMER POLICEMAN TARIQ ABD AL-ALIM (NAME PREVIOUSLY REPORTED), SOCIETY'S REAL NUMBER TWO, WAS PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR BOMBING OF MUSIC INSTITUTE. HE STILL AT LARGE.

4. OTHER REPORTS OF ARRESTS CLAIM ADDITIONAL WEAPONS FOUND, ALONG WITH DOCUMENTS LISTING PUBLIC FIGURES FOR LIQUIDATION (AMONG THEM DEPUTY INTERIOR MINISTER NABAWI), AND PLANS FOR FURTHER SABOTAGE AND TERRORIST OPERATIONS. ALSO DISCOVERED CHECK MADE OUT BY ONE ABD AL-LATIF AHMAD RIHAN ON CAIRO BRANCH OF PORT SAID BANK. ADDITIONAL ARRESTEES ASCRIBED SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPORTANCE ARE KHALID ABD AL-HAMID SAQR (AKA ABU SAMA), AND MAGDI SABR HABIB (AKA ABU YASIN). ALSO ARRESTED WAS JORDANIAN ABD AL-MUN'IM ABD AL-SALAM, WHO, PRESS CLAIMS TO KNOW IS A FINANCIER OF SOCIETY.

5. SHUKRI HIMSELF STILL UNDERGOING INTERROGATION, AND PRESS HARPS ON FACT THAT HE IS IGNORANT OF THE "SIMPLEST TEACHINGS OF ISLAM" BEYOND HANDFUL OF CATCH PHRASES USED IN INCITING GULLIBLE YOUTH. ACCORDING TO PRESS, SHUKRI IS A FORMER MEMBER OF "RELIGIOUS GROUP" (I.E, IKHWAN) WHO WAS ARRESTED IN 1965 GOE CAMPAIGN AGAINST BROTHERHOOD. WHILE IN PRISON, HE SAID TO HAVE BROKEN WITH IKHWAN AND, UPON RELEASE IN MAY 1970 AMNESTY BY SADAT, FORMED HIS OWN GROUP. PAPERS SAY SHUKRI ARRESTED IN OTHER STATE SECURITY CASES BETWEEN 1971 AND 1976. SHUKRI INTERROGATION FURTHER REPORTED TO DISCLOSE THAT SOCIETY AIMS TO CHANGE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEM OF EGYPT THROUGH CREATION OF PRIVATE ARMED FORCE. SHUKRI ALSO ACCUSED OF FORMING CELLS IN "ARAB COUNTRIES" TO SUPPLY HIM WITH FUNDS FOR ARS TO OVERTHROW EGYPTIAN AND OTHER ARAB REGIMES.

6. MAJOR GENERAL MAKHLUF, CHIEF OF MILITARY PROSECUTION APPARATUS, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT ALL EFFORTS UNDER WAY TO COMPLETE

INTERROGATIONS OF ARRESTEES AND BEGIN TRIALS FAST AS POSSIBLE.
SECOND MILITARY COURT REPORTEDLY WILL BE ORGANIZED AS WELL.

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7. GOE TACTICS: MAJOR EFFORT TO DISCREDIT SOCIETY IN PRESS
CONTINUES. IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS FIGURES, INCLUDING SECRETARY
OF AZHAR, HAVE ISSUED STATEMENTS IN CONDEMNATION OF ANTI-ISLAMIC
NATURE OF SOCIETY BELIEFS. (NEITHER GRAND SHAYKH OF AZHAR
NOR MUFTI OF EGYPT HAVE YET BEEN HEARD FROM, HOWEVER). PRESS
DEVOTES CONSIDERABLE SPACE TO DENUNCIATIONS OF TAKFIR ACTIVITIES
BY RELATIVES OF ARRESTED MEMBERS AND PRESIDENCE REPORTEDLY
INNUNDATED BY MESSAGES TO SAME EFFECT. EDITORIAL
COMMENTARY, EXTENSIVE IN PAST TWO DAYS, SPLIT BETWEEN
REFUTATION OF TAKFIR THEOLOGY AND EFFUSIVE APPROVAL OF
WIDESPREAD PUBLIC COOPERATION WITH POLICE INVESTIGATION EFFORTS.
PRESS LAUDS ASSISTANCE RECEIVED FROM TAKFIR MEMBERS WHO HAVE
"DISCOVERED TRUE" NATURE OF ORGANIZATION FROM DHAHABI MORDER
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AND BOMBINGS. ACCORDING MAHLUF, THESE WILL BE GIVEN IMMUNITY FROM PROSECUTION.

8. COMMENT: GOE CONTINUING TO RELY ON IMPRESSION OF EFFICIENT INVESTIGATION TO QUIET PUBLIC CONCERN OVER EGYPTIAN SECURITY SITUATION. NEVERTHELESS, THERE LITTLE FUNDAMENTALLY CHEERING IN ARRESTS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH TAKFIR, AND NATIONAL SCOPE--EVEN INTERNATIONAL--OF ITS MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITIES. SITES OF ARRESTS COVER BULK OF POPULATED PORTION OF EGYPT, AND MAY FURTHER IMPRESSION THAT GOE HAS LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE IT GETS TO THE BOTTOM OF TAKFIR BARREL. WE NOTE THAT, DESPITE PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES, VARIETY OF PRIVATE BUSINESSES IN CAIRO, SUCH AS AIR LINE OFFICES, HAVE INSTITUTED SECURITY MEASURES OF THEIR OWN.

9. MEANWHILE, IT INTERESTING THAT NAME OF IKHWAN NEVER SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN PRESS REPORTS. PUBLIC TREATMENT OF AFFAIR SUGGESTS THAT GOE CAREFULLY AVOIDING CREATING IMPRESSION THAT THERE ANY LINK BETWEEN IKHWAN AND TAKFIR. WE NOTE IN THIS REGARD REPORT OF SHUKRI BREAK WITH IKHWAN DURING HIS IMPRISONMENT. PARTICULARLY FASCINATING WAS COLUMN BY AKHBAR EDITOR MUSTAFA AMIN JULY 11 WHICH IN EFFECT ABSOLVED IKHWAN OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ABERRATIONS SUCH AS TAKFIR. AMIN SAYS THAT IKHWAN SUPREME GUIDE, THE LATE HASSAN AL-HODAYBI, IMPRISONED IN NEXT CELL TO SHUKRI, SOUGHT "TO MAKE HIM UNDERSTAND THAT WHAT HE DID CONFLICTED WITH ISLAM. FOR ISLAM, THE GUIDE SAID, DOES NOT COMPEL PEOPLE TO EMBRACE A CERTAIN RELIGION NOR DOES IT KILL THEM IF THEY HOLD DIFFERENT VIEWS." ACCORDING AMIN, HODAYBI FORCED TO EXCOMMUNICATE SHUKRI AND OTHERS "WHO SUPPORTED IDEA OF LIQUIDATION." HODAYBI, IN LIGHT OF THIS INCIDENT, THEN WROTE BOOK ENTITLED "ADVOCATES AND NOT JUDGES" WHICH HELD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT IKHWAN WAS NOT IN BUSINESS OF CONDEMNING PEOPLE FOR HERESY.

10. GOE THEREFORE SEEMS EAGER TO REASSURE IKHWAN, THE TOLERATED ULTRA-ORTHODOX MAINSTREAM, THAT IT IS NOT ITSELF ABOUT TO BE SUBJECT TO REPRESSION. IKHWAN HAS NOW HAD ABOUT TWO YEARS OF RELATIVELY FREE HAND TO ORGANIZE ITS WIDESPREAD APPEAL. AS WE HAVE NOTED IN PAST, IT IS INCREASINGLY POWERFUL BODY AND GOE WILL NOT LIGHTLY COME TO BLOWS WITH IT. GOE TACTIC PROBABLY ALSO SEEKING TO MAINTAIN OPTION, HOWEVER DANGEROUS, OF USING ULTRA-ORTHODOX ISLAMIC IKHWAN AS FOIL TO DOMESTIC LEFT. EILT
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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